

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-03 EUR-08 DODE-00 NSC-05

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R 060951Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7726

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 0858

LIMDIS

PARIS PASS AMBASSADOR STEIGMAN THROUGH POL:HMELONE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, GB, FR

SUBJ: FOREIGN MILITARY SALES TO GABON

1. CHARGE CALLED ON FRENCH AMBASSADOR DELAUNEY MAY 4 TO INFORM HIM OF STATUS OF FMS SALES TO GABON. DURING CONVERSATION AMBASSADOR DELAUNEY (PROTECTSOURCE) PASSED ON FOLLOWING INFORMATION RELATIVE TO FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN GABON.

2. PRESIDENT BONGO HAD MADE "VERY SUBSTANTIAL" REQUEST FOR FRENCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN 1976. WHILE GOF WAS MAKING SERIOUS EFFORT TO RESPOND TO THIS REQUEST, IT WAS "FAR SHORT" OF BONGO'S DEMANDS. DELAUNEY SAID THAT TOTAL VALUE OF FRENCH PROGRAM IN 1976 WOULD BE CLOSE TO \$5 MILLION. HE EXPLAINED THAT GOF WAS UNABLE TO DO MORE DUE TO CURRENT DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AS WELL AS SUBSTANTIAL COMMITMENTS ALREADY MADE IN OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA. IN ADDITION, GOF AGREEMENT TO SUPPLY PILOTS AND MECHANICS IN CONNECTION WITH SALE OF 5 MIRAGES TO GABON WHICH IS COUNTED AS SEPARATE PROGRAM WAS PROVING TO BE EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE.

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3. DELAUNEY EXPRESSED SOME REGRET THAT OUR FMS PROGRAM WAS NOT LARGER. HE SAID THAT SOVIETS, ROMANIANS AND TO LESSER EXTENT PRC ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO SELL OR GIVE GOG MILITARY EQUIPMENT. HE FEARS THAT IN FACE OF INADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM US AND FRANCE BONGO WILL FEEL FORCED TO TURN TO THESE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES FOR THEIR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. HE CITED, FOR EXAMPLE, OFFER FROM SOVIETS TO SELL BONGO "ANY MILITARY EQUIPMENT HE WANTS" AT PRICES UP TO 20 PERCENT BELOW COMPARABLE WESTERN EQUIPMENT AND WITH 30-YEAR FINANCING AT 2 PER CENT INTEREST. DELAUNEY SAID HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT BONGO'S DECISION WILL BE, BUT HE DOES KNOW THAT PRESIDENT PLANS TO SEND MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE TO MOSCOW SOON TO INVESTIGATE OFFER. DELAUNEY ALSO MENTIONED THAT ROMANIANS HAVE BEEN "VERY ACTIVE" AND HAVE FURNISHED AS EITHER GIFT OR UNDER CONCESSIONARY FINANCING MILITARY VEHICLES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. FYI: ABOUT 25 OR 30 ROMANIAN JEEPS RECENTLY ARRIVED IN LIBREVILLE. END FYI

4. DELAUNEY THANKED CHARGE FOR KEEPING HIM INFORMED ON FMS PROGRAM AND SAID HE HOPED OUR TWO EMBASSIES WOULD CONTINUE TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION.

5. PARIS FOR AMBASSADOR STEIGMAN: DELAUNEY IS LEAVING FOR PARIS MAY 7 WITH PRESIDENT BONGO AND TOLD CHARGE HE PLANNED TO RETURN TO LIBREVILLE MAY 17 ON UT-781. CHARGE MENTIONED THAT AMBASSADOR STEIGMAN WAS PLANNING TO TAKE SAME FLIGHT AND DELAUNEY SAID HE WOULD "LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING HIM." DEJARNETTE

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